

CHAPTER VI: HOUSING

Housing needs and preferences in the United States have changed greatly in the last three decades. These national trends are reflected in Winchester. The population analysis in a previous chapter noted a decline in household size in Winchester. At the same time the actual number of households is increasing relatively faster with a 17% increase between 1980 and 1990. Also the population is aging with the percent of population under 20 years of age declining.

Greatly increased cost of housing relative to income has made it more and more difficult for families and individuals to find affordable housing. A second family wage earner has been necessary to enable many families to own a home. Dual wage earning households have less time for yard and home care and with fewer children families are less inclined to purchase yard space considered necessary even 10 years ago. Historically, however, urban land consumption per capita has been increasing steadily.

All of these trends emphasize the need for conservation of existing housing and careful planning for future housing in Winchester. As an official statement of the City's policy with respect to housing, the Comprehensive Plan can establish housing goals and recommend housing programs in the best interest of the City and its region. The housing analysis of the 1974 Plan noted that Winchester should provide a wide range of housing opportunities having appeal to all income levels and age groups and that it should conserve as much open space as possible around housing units as an important factor in locational decisions by all residents. Also the plan noted that care must be taken to assure equal housing opportunity throughout the City.

The housing goals and objectives formulated in the 1974 Plan remain valid today. These are listed as follows:

Goal for Housing: To encourage and assist the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing units and the construction of new housing units so that every Winchester resident is provided with a decent home in a suitable living environment.

Objective 1: To provide a minimum housing standards code that will result in the improvement of all substandard housing in the City.

Objective 2: To provide a range of housing densities that will complement the provision of community facilities and that will encourage varied and interesting residential neighborhoods.

Objective 3: To provide a full range of housing types that will meet the needs of the community and which will provide varied interesting and safe neighborhoods.

Objective 4: To encourage the production of single-family dwelling units of the types and proportions that will produce varied and

interesting neighborhoods and which will satisfy the varying needs and desires of consumers.

Objective 5: To facilitate the production of multi-family dwelling units of the types and proportions that will produce varied and interesting neighborhoods and which will satisfy the varying needs and desires of consumers.

Objective 6: To encourage the maximum utilization of the residential planned community concept in the City.

Implementation programs to fulfill these goals and objectives must guide a wide array of social and economic forces. Full advantage should be taken of federal and state programs which can provide significant financial assistance. Local regulations can be reviewed with the objective of reducing unnecessary obstacles to development, promoting infill development, increasing the use of clustered development, and increasing the mix of housing types on a given site in order to encourage affordable housing to meet the requirements of changing household composition and diverse incomes. In Winchester it is particularly important to encourage preservation of historic and architecturally significant structures which lend charm to older neighborhoods.

In the long run, care for all housing in the City is important. For the near future, however, attention must be concentrated on older sections of the City, for here is where the problems are concentrated. This is where the City's historic structures are located and in Winchester here is where most low and moderate income families and racial minorities live. As noted in the District Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1978 by the Lord Fairfax Planning District Commission, all housing problems cannot be solved by housing programs. However, local governments are not in the position to provide direct cash housing assistance, and this situation is not likely to change. Therefore, the City's housing programs must in large measure be dependent upon private or state and federal programs which can provide financial aid.

OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Most housing in the City is in good or excellent condition. However, the majority of the housing stock in the City is over 30 years of age and because of this some areas of the City have higher concentrations of poor housing than the City as a whole. These concentrations are generally located in the periphery or immediately adjacent to the center City area. A significant portion of these areas are located within the City's Historic Zoning District and consequently form a valuable historic resource to the City, which, if upgraded and improved, can contribute to the City's revenue base through increased real estate taxes and tourism.

The 1990 Census indicates the City's population to be 21,947, an increase of 8.6% from 1980. The net effect of the 1990 census serves to indicate that the City's growth did not match the statewide growth rate of 14.6%. Thus the total housing stock requires a higher level of property maintenance and rehabilitation to continue to generate an adequate level of

local tax revenues to provide adequate governmental services. The 1990 Census indicates there are 9808 dwelling units in the City, up 1427 from the 8,407 dwelling units within the City in 1980. Of this amount, about 8% are estimated to have significant or major building deficiencies based on an exterior building condition survey. What is more important, however, is the location and general concentration of these structures in the City. Several concentrations offer an opportunity for the City to develop concerted and coordinated efforts to upgrade these areas through a combination of public funds and financial incentives to stimulate private investment in property rehabilitation.

STRATEGY FOR HOUSING IMPROVEMENT

The essential factors necessary for the success of a neighborhood revitalization program are:

1. *Adequate public and/or private resources available to achieve substantial impact within an area.*
2. *A well-formulated, rational plan of implementation that reflects a strategy for meeting physical, housing, and/or commercial rehabilitation needs of the area.*
3. *An experienced, professional administrative staff with the capacity to implement revitalization program activities, particularly rehabilitation.*

A neighborhood revitalization program must be implemented in a coordinated manner to create a physical environment conducive to a higher level of private investment. This investment climate is created through the coordinated activities of:

Public Improvements - street, curb and gutter and sidewalk repair or upgrading, water, stormwater and sanitary sewer improvements, street lighting and signs, park and recreation facilities, etc.

Financial Incentives - attractive financing mechanisms for residential and commercial rehabilitation, historic preservation, investment credits, real estate tax deferral, accelerated depreciation, and rent subsidies to permit continued occupancy of rental property and the avoidance of involuntary displacement of its low- and moderate-income occupants, and

Removal of Blight and Blighting Influences - rehabilitation and/or replacement of structures which no longer serve an economic use.

During 1980, the City of Winchester received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) assistance for the North and South Kent Street Revitalization Areas under the program administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. In 1989, the City received CDBG assistance in the form of a two-year Residential Improvements

type of Community Improvement Grant (CIG). The funds are being used by the City to meet a portion of the above housing improvement strategy.

The following neighborhood assessment identifies potential areas of the City warranting consideration for future Small Cities Program Grants and a recommended strategy for selection of future areas.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENTS

A neighborhood survey was conducted during January, 1981 and updated in 1991 to measure the level of housing deterioration and lack of public facilities throughout the City. Exterior housing conditions were evaluated according to the following criteria:

Sound - housing with no defects, or only slight defects correctable by regular maintenance.

Substandard - housing with one or more defects of an intermediate to serious nature which require more repairs than would be provided through normal maintenance. These must be corrected if the building is to provide safe and adequate shelter. Substandard housing includes housing which does not provide safe and adequate shelter and endangers the health, safety and well-being of the occupant and surrounding structures. In some instances, rehabilitation may not be economically justified due to the extent of major structural defects.

Four of the seven neighborhoods identified in the 1982 Plan are suggested as areas for further study and improvement. (Neighborhoods D, F and G as described in the 1982 Plan are deleted) Population, minority, and housing unit data is based on 1990 U.S. Census Block Statistics. Other data is from field surveys conducted during 1991).

Neighborhood A

		Approximate Boundaries
Estimated Population	584	
Minority	416	North - Leicester St.
Elderly	11%	South - Pall Mall St.
Residential Structures	268	East - Kent St.
Sound	70%	West - Loudoun St.
Substandard	30%	

Neighborhood "A" borders the South Kent Area (a funded Community Development Block Grant neighborhood) to the south, encompassing 26 acres, and entirely within the Historic District. The majority of structures are single family residences, constructed between 35 and 200 years ago. The historic significance of many of the structures demands a high level of rehabilitation in order to preserve the character of the neighborhood. Improvements made in the adjacent South Kent Area have stimulated some rehabilitation efforts in this neighborhood.

In addition to residential structures in the area, a few commercial and public establishments are located along South Cameron Street, a major arterial into the City. However, the nonresidential uses do not detract from the residential nature of the neighborhood.

Because of its proximity to the Center City area, safe sidewalk conditions are important for both the young and elderly. Some sections of the area do not have sidewalks, and cars parked close to buildings cause pedestrians to walk in the street. Approximately 8,000 linear feet of sidewalk requires repair or construction, and 2,000 linear feet of curb and gutter require either construction or repair.

A major storm sewer system proposed by the City would run through the neighborhood. Approximately 1,000 linear feet of 48" storm sewer runs down Pall Mall Street and empties into Town Run. The improvement would benefit a large portion of the City as well as the neighborhood.

A 16-inch water line shown to be constructed in Loudoun Street was completed in June, 1987. The other water improvements consists of an 8-inch water lines in Germain, Monmouth and Leicester Streets between Loudoun and Kent. To date, the portion of Germain between Cameron and Kent has been completed, with the remainder scheduled for some date in the future.

Approximately two-thirds of the households are tenant occupied. This circumstance will require special financial incentives to investors who want to rehabilitate their property in the neighborhood. Loans through the Community Development Block Grant Program and relevant tax incentives could provide necessary stimulation for investment.

Neighborhood A is designated as one of the highest priority neighborhoods for seeking financial assistance under the competitive Community Development Block Grant Program following completion of the 1989 grant for North Kent Street. A \$21,950 Planning Grant was awarded to the City in August 1991 for a large portion of this area. It is recommended that the City pursue Community Development funds for subsequent CIG funds during future competitions.

Neighborhood B

Estimated Population		Approximate Boundaries
Minority	769	North - Cork St. South - Gerrard St. East - S. Loudoun St. West - Washington St.
Elderly	654	
Residential Structures	22%	
Sound	363	
Substandard	53%	
	47%	

The neighborhood is a conglomerate of structures ranging in age from about 35 years to over 200 years old. Most of the structures are located within the Historic District. The neighborhood is adjacent to the South Kent Area and Neighborhood A. Portions of four blocks adjacent to the

Braddock and Leicester Street intersection were included in the 1991 Planning Grant study area.

The majority of residential structures are two-story single family or duplex row houses. Private investment for rehabilitation of homes has occurred along with rehabilitation by the local nonprofit, Preservation of Historic Winchester (PHW). A high level of rehabilitation to preserve the character of the structures in the neighborhood should be introduced to preserve architectural features throughout the area such as ornate entrance and window designs, front porches, and original stone, frame and log siding.

A group of homes located on Leicester Street between Washington Street and Braddock Street is said to be original servant quarters for a mansion built in the mid 1800's. All of these residences have significant deficiencies and should be restored.

In addition to residential structures in the area, commercial and public establishments include the former Winchester-Frederick County jail and the South End Fire Company. Small business and offices are scattered along Braddock Street and Loudoun Street where traffic can be heavy at times. The two types of land uses are compatible since the size and amount of businesses is not intensive. Further, the neighborhood is not likely to experience significant conversion to commercial under the restrictive Residential-Business (RB-1) zoning.

Water line improvements are needed in the neighborhood. Approximately 5200' of line would provide the necessary fire protection to adequately serve the area. Presently, small lines and inadequate looping do not provide adequate fire flow. The 16-inch water line shown on Loudoun Street has been installed. The only other improvement made to date is one half block of the water line in Cecil Street between Braddock and Washington. The remainder of the improvements outlined have not yet been scheduled.

Another necessary improvement is the repair or construction of sidewalks. Dangerous conditions caused by root buckling, cracking of concrete walks and lack of sidewalks exist throughout the neighborhood. Sidewalks in poor condition should be replaced with the same material or brick in keeping with the historical nature of the area. Curb cut ramps for the handicapped should also be provided at intersections. The number of elderly in the area and the neighborhood's proximity to the commercial district necessitates safe sidewalk conditions for pedestrians.

Portions of a proposed storm sewer system would be located in the area, emptying into Town Run. These improvements have only a minor effect on the area. Few storm water problems exist in the neighborhood.

It is recommended that the City stimulate private investment in revitalizing the neighborhood. Approximately two-thirds of the dwelling units are tenant occupied. By providing tax incentives and loans through the Community Development Block Grant program, private investors would be more apt to rehabilitate their property. Property tax breaks for the elderly provide incentives for those homeowners on fixed income to maintain or rehabilitate their homes.

Neighborhood C

		Approximate Boundaries
Estimated Population	397	
Minority	80	North - James St.
Elderly	18%	South - Whitlock St.
Residential Structures	173	East - S. Kent St.
Sound	60%	West - Valley Ave.
Substandard	40%	

Neighborhood C was targeted as one of the first neighborhoods to seek funds for under the CDBG program. An application for a Comprehensive Community Development type of CIG totalling \$929,500 was submitted in March of 1991 but was deemed ineligible until completion of the North Kent Street project. The project area lies to the south of Neighborhood B, and is approximately 38 acres. Structures in the area lack the degree of historic and architectural significance found in Neighborhood B. Two public schools, Quarles School and Handley High School, are located at its borders, along with Sacred Heart and Orrick Cemeteries.

Within the neighborhood, there is a variety of land uses, residential, commercial and light industrial. At the northern border is a dairy products company, a service station and an antique store. An auto service shop, electrical/appliance warehouse, and auto parts store are located inside the area in addition to a few other small stores beneath dwelling units. The dominant land use, however, is residential.

Residences are a mixture of single- and multi-family dwellings. Owners should be encouraged to rehabilitate so as to retain the character of the neighborhood. Since over 72% of the dwelling units are tenant-occupied, private investment needs to be stimulated through attractive rehabilitation financing programs.

Sidewalk repair and construction is needed in parts of the neighborhood. As in Neighborhood B, root buckling, cracked walks and lack of sidewalks create hazardous walkways. Sidewalk repair and construction is also important because of the two public schools in the area.

Storm drainage improvements are badly needed to reduce the frequency of flooding and extent of water damage to existing residences in the area. The Master Storm Drainage Plan calls for installation of 850 feet of storm sewer pipe ranging from 54 to 60 inches in diameter along Southwerk Street to carry water from the west end of the neighborhood down to the Quarles School site where improvements have already been made to direct the water toward Overlook Park. Erosion Control measures are needed in the park itself. Installation of curb and gutter together with drop inlets will reduce water flowing down many of the streets in the area.

Water line improvements consist of approximately 4000' of new mains. The water line shown in Loudoun Street between Southwerk and Gerrard and that portion of the water line in Bond Street between Valley and Loudoun has been installed. Other water line improvements in the neighborhood have not yet been scheduled.

Neighborhood E

		Approximate Boundaries
Estimated Population	614	
Minority	548	North - Wyck Street
Elderly	24%	South - Baker Street
Residential Structures	321	East - CSX Railroad
Sound	69%	West - N. Braddock Street
Substandard	31%	

The majority of homes in this area are large single-family homes which have been converted to multifamily units. The neighborhood is located directly north of the Center City and falls partially within the Historic District. All rental structures rehabilitated within the Historic District would qualify for special Federal tax incentives.

The structures along North Loudoun Street, many built during the last century, contain many significant architectural features. Some rehabilitation has been done; more should be encouraged.

Some homes front on Kerns Alley and on the dead-end alley between North Loudoun Street and North Braddock Street south of North Avenue. Both alleys are unpaved and inadequate for proper vehicular and pedestrian access. The proximity of structures at road intersections makes street widening difficult. However, if proper access could be achieved, rear lot access for homes along North Loudoun Street would alleviate some of the need for off-street parking.

The neighborhood is adjacent to the CSX Railroad and a light industrial area. A large food processing plant is located in the northeast corner of the area. Two warehouses and an industrial laundromat are located in the southeast corner of the area.

North Loudoun Street or U.S. Route 11 (South) is a major north-south street. Traffic is heavy through the neighborhood at times. North Cameron Street or U.S. Route 11 (North) is also heavily traveled by large trucks.

The largest concentration of housing deficiencies is located between North Loudoun Street and North Cameron Street. These homes are affected by the proximity of the CSX Railroad and the food processing plant.

Approximately 3000' of water lines are needed for adequate fire flow in the neighborhood according to the City's comprehensive water system study. The major water line improvement consists of a 12-inch water line in North Loudoun Street. This project was completed in 1990. Other water improvements shown within this neighborhood have not been scheduled.

Sanitary sewer improvements are needed in Kerns Alley to adequately serve those dwellings fronting on the alley. Approximately 400' of sewer line would be needed. An estimated 200 square yards of sidewalk along Loudoun Street should be repaired.

The area has been designated as the second area for which CDBG assistance should be sought. All improvements will help revitalize the neighborhood itself and continue the revitalization of the center city area.

Additional Neighborhoods

While investigating neighborhoods throughout the City, some areas exhibited signs of housing deficiencies and warrant future observation to determine neighborhood decline.

Small pockets of poor housing conditions are located on the edges of the North Kent Street target area. One area exists along the west side of Kent Street between Liberty Avenue and Beau Street. Significant deficiencies can be found among the 14 residential structures and therefore many require future treatment. The area is zoned commercial/industrial (CM-1). On the east side of the target area, small pockets such as the one along Charles Street also need attention.

Another residential concentration is along Gibbens Street north of Neighborhood E. The residences are located on narrow lots, fronting directly on the edge of pavement, and contain major structural deficiencies. Gibbens Street is only 20' wide with parking on both sides creating traffic congestion. Other residences in the neighborhood also contain significant and major structural deficiencies.

A residential area immediately north of Berryville Avenue includes single-family homes probably built during the 1950's. There are three homes located on Conway Street which are improperly located on the lots with deficiencies and which exert a blighting influence upon the neighborhood. Some degree of overcrowding of structures on lots exists along Ross Street near its intersection with Conway Street. These structures have significant deficiencies with some minor refuse accumulation.

Another neighborhood located along Monticello Street, Jones Street and Armour Dale contains some vacant structures and approximately ten structures having significant or major deficiencies. Some portions of the nearby York Avenue and Packer Street area also need attention.

An additional area of housing deterioration is along Sharp Street on the east side of the CDB. In the immediate surrounding areas, many homes have been renovated and converted into offices. This trend appears likely to continue and private real estate market conditions will allow for a compatible change in the uses in this area.

Selection of a neighborhood revitalization area for a future Community Development Program grant should be approached on the basis of building upon positive results achieved in areas already funded. Using the North and South Kent areas as the core, adjacent areas have been selected for future grants so that progressive revitalization of the central city area can achieve maximum beneficial results.

PUBLIC POLICIES

A variety of programs are available for supporting affordable housing and preservation of Winchester's historic housing stock. The last comprehensive Housing Assistance Plan and Community Development Program was adopted in 1976 and should be updated. Since a significant portion of areas containing concentrations of deteriorating housing are located within the City's Historic Zoning District, neighborhood revitalization activities should take advantage of existing and potential financial incentives available through Federal, State and Local legislation. These incentives should be coupled with favorable financing techniques to stimulate the use of private funds for rehabilitation under the Community Development Program.

Historic Preservation Housing Incentives

Incentives for private sector investment in historic preservation of residential structures exist primarily in the form of federal income tax investment credits and deductions and local real property tax exemptions. The Secretary of the Department of Interior, in coordination with the Internal Revenue Service, provides tax incentives for qualified capital expenditures to rehabilitate properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or within Historic Districts listed on the National Register.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 reduced the financial attractiveness of historic preservation but maintained a 20 percent investment tax credit for costs associated with rehabilitation of qualified historic buildings and a 10 percent credit for costs associated with eligible work on non-historic buildings which were built prior to 1936. The State Historic Preservation Office, which in Virginia is administered through the Department of Historic Resources, must certify projects in advance and can offer assistance in preparing applications. Assistance is also available locally through nonprofit organizations such as Preservation of Historic Winchester (PHW).

Legislation passed by the Virginia Legislature in 1979 added sections 58-760.2 and 58-760.3 to provide for exemption of real estate taxes for certain residential real estate. Winchester adopted a local ordinance in 1984 to provide real estate tax exemptions for substantially rehabilitated residential properties over a ten year period. Section 21-218 of the Winchester Code defines such properties as those located within the Historic Winchester (HW) District with structures at least 25 years old which have been improved so as to increase the assessed value by at least 40 percent without increasing the total square footage by more than 15 percent. Provisions also exist for rehabilitating mixed use and commercial or industrial structures.

Income tax deductions and property tax reductions can also be obtained for granting historic preservation easements which would restrict the rights to demolish or otherwise alter a residential structure. Tax deductions are also applicable to property transfers whereby owners can bequeath, hold a remainder interest, or establish leaseback provisions for their property.

Direct sales whereby property is sold at a bargain to a nonprofit group also provides tax benefits.

A final category of incentives for historic preservation of residential property comprises grants and loans from private, state and federal sources. In addition to the Virginia Historic Preservation Foundation's Revolving fund, PHW maintains the Jennings Revolving Fund locally. These funds provide money for purchase of historic properties which are then resold with preservation easements attached. The proceeds from resale are then placed back in the funds for purchase of additional buildings.

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, administered through the Virginia Department of Historic Preservation, offers grants for studies and plans promoting historic preservation. Winchester should take any actions necessary to obtain CLG status. The major CLG prerequisites of adopting a local preservation ordinance and establishing a local design review board are already completed. Other grants which the City may benefit from include the Critical Issues Fund, the Preservation Services Fund, the National Preservation Loan Fund, and the Inner City Ventures Fund, all available from the National Trust. The latter fund offers grants and loans totalling between \$40,000 and \$100,000 for purchasing and rehabilitating historic structures for low- and moderate-income housing.

Housing for Elderly Persons

A local real estate tax exemption ordinance, effective January 1, 1975, has been adopted by the City to assist homeowners at least 65 years of age. This ordinance provides for a tax exemption for certain elderly property owners in the City on a sliding scale determined by income. The ordinance has citywide impact and recognizes the financial problems facing elderly homeowners in paying real estate taxes and upkeep to maintain the housing stock at an adequate standard. This ordinance will especially assist low- and moderate-income elderly property owners in areas of the City undergoing neighborhood revitalization.

Assisted elderly housing such as the 81 units in Winchester House I should be encouraged to be provided in the downtown area where accessibility to shopper goods, medical, governmental and offices as well as public transportation are most concentrated. Although new construction sites may be limited in supply, rehabilitation or conversion of existing structures may contribute to central city stabilization by increasing the population and thereby supporting the retail core of the City. Special zoning ordinance provisions allow for elderly units under the B-1 and RB-1 Districts of the City Zoning Ordinance.

Housing Assistance

In addition to the above incentives, owners of rental property should be encouraged to rehabilitate their property and avoid involuntary displacement of low- and moderate-income occupants by use of the Section 8, Existing or Moderate Rehabilitation Program. This program is designed to assist an investor to recover the cost of rehabilitation through increased rents by provision of a rent subsidy to low- and moderate-income renters. The City has about 40 active units currently and has been working to increase the

number of Section 8 Housing Assistance certificates. The City should continue to pursue additional financial assistance including the use of rent subsidy vouchers through the Virginia Housing Development Authority.

In 1989, the Virginia General Assembly created the Virginia Housing Partnership Fund (VHPF) to provide grants for homeless assistance, emergency home repair and modification, and seed money for the development of nonprofit housing partnerships such as City Light Development which is providing affordable housing alternatives in Winchester. VHPF have been leveraged with CDBG funds as part of the 1989 North Kent Street Grant project and should continue to be sought for future housing rehabilitation projects. The General Assembly also established a Housing for the Homeless, Elderly, and Disabled Fund as a special fund to which Virginia taxpayers may designate a portion of their tax refunds. The code has a 1993 sunset provision.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) are available to owners of qualified low-income housing properties constructed, rehabilitated, or acquired. The credits apply over a ten year period to rental properties meeting requirements for low-income tenant occupancy as long as the property remains rented for at least 15 years.

In addition to the above mentioned programs offering tax credits, tax deductions, exemptions, grants and subsidies, the Comprehensive Reinvestment Act (CRA) requires financial lending institutions to meet minimum levels of lending in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Recently, the CRA provisions have been enforced more stringently thus evoking greater interest among local financial institutions. The 1990 Census will provide an excellent data source for identifying low-income areas of the City. An effort should be made to provide local lending institutions with this information.

Administrative Powers

One of the major objectives of neighborhood revitalization is to create an improved environment to encourage a higher level of private investment. This objective requires public policies and actions to correct, remove, reverse or reduce environmental and blighting influences.

The ability of the City to accomplish the objectives of neighborhood revitalization is aided by the existence of City staff trained to coordinate activities funded under the Community Development Block Grant Program. One of the most difficult problems is the removal of substandard structures. Existing local ordinances can be used to remove buildings which exhibit a public safety or health hazard. In most cases, however, this procedure has been used only in extreme cases and is generally ineffective. At the same time, failure to remove (or improve) substandard structures contributes to an environment which discourages private investment and seriously jeopardizes the potential for achieving substantial impact in neighborhood revitalization programs.

Capital Improvement Program Coordination

In many cases, a Community Development Block Grant cannot pay for all of the required public improvements necessary to serve a neighborhood. This is because the program has certain ineligible activities that cannot be funded. Under these circumstances, it is recommended that the City support the neighborhood revitalization program by budgeting funds necessary to pay for ineligible activities through its Capital Improvement Budget. Typical examples are renovation of water lines, sanitary sewers, schools and educational facilities located within a neighborhood revitalization area.

The City has had a policy requiring the maintenance of sidewalks by property owners. Many of the older neighborhoods of the City have sidewalks paved with brick or concrete and which, through time, heave and become uneven causing a serious hazard for pedestrians, particularly the elderly. This policy has been modified by the City in implementing some sidewalk improvements in the annual Public Works program. This practice should be continued in future neighborhood improvement areas in which Community Development Program funds are targeted.

Communitywide Fair Housing Policies

Communities which receive Federal funds under the Community Development Block Grant Program are charged with the responsibility to develop a strategy to increase the choice of housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. This strategy should encompass the following long range goals and objectives:

1. *Increase the availability of housing outside of areas of lower income or minority concentration, and*
2. *Actions to affirmatively further fair housing.*

The following actions have been taken by the City or are proposed to meet the above goals and objectives:

1. *The City has, in conjunction with its present Community Development Block Grant, employed an administrative assistant to provide outreach, counseling and referral services to lower income residents to locate available assisted housing outside of concentrated lower income areas.*
2. *The City has advertised to the public and informed state, local and Federal housing agencies of the availability of administrative assistance by the City to provide promotional and assistance services to initiate the development of assisted housing programs in the City.*
3. *Establish site selection standards for new construction in general conformity with the following criteria:*
 - a. *The site must be adequate in size, exposure and contour to accommodate the number and type of units proposed and adequate utilities (water, sewer, gas, and electricity) with streets to serve the site.*

- b. The site must not be located in an area of minority concentration unless sufficient, comparable opportunities exist for housing outside areas of minority concentration.*
 - c. The site should promote a greater choice of housing opportunities and avoid areas containing a high proportion of low income persons.*
 - d. The site should be free from significant adverse environmental conditions, such as soil instability, flooding, sewage hazards, harmful air pollution, smoke or dust, excessive noise, vibration, vehicular traffic, or fire hazards.*
 - e. The neighborhood should not be one which is seriously detrimental to a desirable family life or which substandard dwellings or other undesirable elements predominate unless there is actively in progress a concerted program to remedy the undesirable conditions.*
 - f. Housing must be generally accessible to social, recreational, educational, commercial, and health facilities and services, and other municipal services at least equivalent to those typically found in unassisted neighborhoods with standard housing of similar market rents.*
- 4. The Planning Department should recommend programs for possible acquisition of sites and/or housing units with public improvements provided to accommodate the development of assisted housing.*
- 5. The City will, in conjunction with the Community Development Coordinator, perform the following actions:*
 - a. Improve the enforcement of Federal and State fair housing laws and ordinances by forwarding complaints to the appropriate agency for review and resolution.*
 - b. Inform the community of fair housing laws and the rights of citizens under State and Federal laws, and provide liaison services between the complainants and State or Federal agency.*
 - c. Inform the community through outreach efforts of the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sex, race etc. in the extension of mortgage credit.*
 - d. Provide information to minority groups regarding local nonprofit agencies which provide services and assistance to increase housing opportunities.*
 - e. Establish or coordinate the provision of training and workshops in home maintenance, improvements, budgeting, and how to seek assisted housing in the community.*

- f. Solicit active involvement of citizen groups to monitor and ensure affirmative marketing efforts of the local board of realtors are implemented.*

The Future Land Use Plan for Winchester anticipates fairly compact development, a considerable variety of housing types and a broad range of values throughout the City. Both single-family housing and multiple-family housing are anticipated. Density requirements under the existing zoning ordinance are quite liberal in permitting small-lot single-family developments and in permitting conversion of older residences to apartments. At the same time, historic and architectural values must be preserved. The most restrictive single-family residence district requires a minimum lot size of only 12,000 square feet. The B-1 District allows densities of 43 units per acre for conventional apartments and higher densities for nonconventional housing such as elderly housing. Finally, the planned unit development device is available to permit variety in housing types in all residential and some commercial districts.



Julie Read

